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ABSTRACT

This paper recounts how one urban-based university addressed the need for teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills required to take on increasing types of leadership roles. The university formed a partnership with a nonprofit organization to design and implement a 32-semester hour master's degree program to address the issue. The program provided opportunities to outstanding classroom teachers to attain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be instructional leaders in their schools and to be involved in preparing future teachers. Five courses were specifically content-based and aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS') five core propositions. The other four courses were designed to provide teachers with knowledge and skills on standards-based teaching and learning by having them engage in activities that mirrored those required in the NBPTS assessment process. Over the course of the program, participants completed four NBPTS entries in their certificate area. Program evaluation includes tracking participant selection, retention, and graduation rates; maintaining records on the extent to which the curriculum is taught as designed; summarizing school-level change initiatives; reporting the number of teachers intending to complete the NBPTS assessment process; collecting participant satisfaction data; and rating participants as potential mentors. (SM)

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PROMOTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN URBAN SCHOOLS

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Promoting Teacher Leadership in Urban Schools

> *There is currently no one best way for higher education institutions to align their advanced master's degree programs with NBPTS standards. Nor are there comprehensive models from which to learn what works best. As more institutions develop their own models and share their successes and experiences, many institutions will be able to draw from an expanding knowledge base.*
>
> Boyce Williams and Jane Leibbrand (1999)

Teachers are increasingly expected to be leaders in a myriad of ways. They are expected to advance students' academic, social and emotional well-being, and they are expected to promote the values and beliefs that students must hold to contribute to, and advance a democratic society. As part of the profession's recent educational reform efforts, teachers are increasingly expected to lead beyond the classroom walls—to promote student learning by spearheading school-level reform efforts and by contributing to the advancement of the profession.

Teacher leadership takes many forms: designing curricular and instructional programs, working effectively with colleagues and parents, developing and implementing school-level policies and procedures, and sharing expertise and wisdom of practice with novices. The problem is that the typical classroom teacher has not been prepared for this diversity of leadership roles. To function effectively in this new and evolving role, the teacher must possess not only the qualities associated with outstanding classroom teaching, but also those associated with effective collaboration and the ability to promote school-level change. How can teacher educators provide teachers with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills required to take on increasing types of leadership roles?

The purpose of this paper is to recount how one urban-based university addressed this question. In the following sections, a brief review of the literature on redesigning teacher education is connected to changes in teaching and in teacher education and the

master's program; the project history and literature-based program design is presented; program evaluation tools and evaluation results are discussed; and recommendations are offered on how to incorporate "best practice" theory into teacher education programs.

Review of the Literature

In 1986, ten years prior to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future's seminal report, What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy published their report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. They recommended:

- Create a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to establish high standards for what teachers need to know and be able to do, and to certify teachers who meet that standard. *This goal was accomplished in 1987 with the creation of NBPTS, which was established to improve student learning by strengthening teaching. In order to achieve that goal, NBPTS established high and rigorous standards for what teachers should know and be able to do, along with a voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet those standards.*

- Restructure the teaching force, and introduce a new category of Lead Teachers with the proven ability to provide active leadership in the redesign of the schools and in helping their colleagues to uphold high standards of learning and teaching. *This goal was recently accomplished in Illinois when a three-tiered system of certification was implemented. The third tier, Master Certification, is only issued to teachers who achieve National Board certification.*

- Develop a new professional curriculum in graduate schools of education leading to a Master in Teaching degree, based on systemic knowledge of teaching and including internships and residencies in the schools. These new programs will make it possible for students to make up during their graduate education substantive course work missed in college. *This goal was realized with the design and implementation of the "Promoting Teacher Leadership in Comer Schools" master's degree cohort.*

In addition to the above recommendations, the Holmes Group's (1995) report, Tomorrow's Schools of Education, added the following:

- Develop a new faculty that is at home working in the public schools as they are at the university. Board certified teachers and other qualified practitioners will join these faculty as colleagues in conducting important research and in better

educating the nation's educators. *This program addressed this recommendation in that program faculty are former and currently practicing teachers, including NBCTs.*

- To provide leadership in making education schools better places for professional study and learning. *This program emphasized the NBPTS core propositions, best practices in teaching, teacher leadership, and professional development.*

- To center our work on professional knowledge and skill for educators who serve children and youth. *The curriculum is designed to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills that reflect accomplished teaching as outlined by NBPTS.*

The program faculty designed and implemented the following curriculum based on recommendations from these seminal reports.

Program History and Design

In 1998, an urban-based university formed a partnership with a non-profit organization to design and implement a 32-semester hour master's degree program to address these issues. The Joyce Foundation provided funding for this project. The work on this project was based on national and state responses to the myriad of reports on improving the quality of teaching and learning in today's schools. The general goals of the program were to: (a) provide opportunities to outstanding classroom teachers to attain the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be instructional leaders in their schools; and (b) to involve these teachers in the preparation of future teachers. Specifically, the program was designed and implemented to accomplish the following:

1. Provide opportunities for teachers in the Comer Systemic School Initiative to study issues related to curriculum and instruction, school reform, and organizational change to improve their own teaching and to function as teacher leaders in their schools;

2. Support a subset of these teachers in their pursuit of the prestigious teaching certificate awarded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and

3. Create a cadre of Comer teachers to serve as school-based teacher educators in UIC teacher preparation programs.

The nature and content of the program's curriculum was consistent with the views expressed by Dr. James Comer. Specifically, the focus on developmental pathways to children's learning was threaded throughout the study of "best teaching practice" for urban students. The curriculum for the project was designed to engage teachers in a course of study that focused on:

(1) best practices in curriculum and instruction for urban youth with particular emphasis on literacy and mathematics;
(2) the role of the teacher leader in the school change process;
(3) theories and practices related to educational reform; and
(4) issues of teacher learning.

The courses encompassed the following principles:

- The Comer philosophy of child development;
- Culture, language, and gender influences on learning;
- Exemplary practice requires ongoing learning through study, systematic inquiry and collaboration;
- Exemplary practice requires construction pedagogical knowledge;
- Teacher leadership is critical to whole school change.

According to data posted on the NBPTS website (Higher Education Initiatives by State, February 2001), teacher preparation programs in approximately 66 colleges and universities in 36 states and the District of Columbia have begun initiatives to incorporate NBPTS into their curriculum in one of the following ways:

- Exploring alignment of degree programs with NBPTS standards (n=63)
- Implementing degree programs aligned with NBPTS standards (n=67)
- Incorporating NBPTS standards into courses (n=76)
- Offers candidates support (n=79)
- Conducting research related to NBPTS standards and certification (n=22)

The "Promoting Teacher Leadership in Comer Schools" master's degree program is one of only seven programs that included all of the above components.

Program Curriculum

In order to accomplish these lofty goals, a 32-semester hour (9 course) master's degree program was designed in the following way. Five of the courses were specifically content-based and were aligned with the NBPTS five core propositions:

NBPTS Core Proposition	**Related Course**
1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.	Child Development
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.	Improving Learning Environments: Math Improving Learning Environments: Literacy
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.	Understanding Teaching and Learning
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.	Understanding Teaching and Learning
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.	School-level Change

The remaining four courses were designed to provide the teachers with knowledge and skills on standards-based teaching and learning by having them engage in activities that mirror those required in the NBPTS assessment process. Over the course of the program, cohort members completed four National Board entries in their certificate area.

UIC - CIG Coursework Proposal – 32 hours

Semester	Fall 1999	Spring 2000	Summer 2000	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Summer 2001
Course	Child Develop-ment 3 hours	Improving Learning Environments: 4 hours	School-level Change 3 hours NBPTS Entry 4	Understanding Teaching & Learning 3 hours	Improving Learning Environ-ments: Literacy 3 hours	
Action Research		4 hours NBPTS Entry		4 hours NBPTS Entry	4 hours NBPTS Entry	4 hours Portfolio Development

Year Three – Curriculum

Thirteen of the 22 cohort participants are engaged in the NBPTS assessment process this year. It is interesting to note that in the original grant proposal, we anticipated a subset of 4-5 teachers out of a projected cohort of 40 to engage in the process at the conclusion of the two-year program. Support is provided to the cohort by a university mentor, an NBCT, and by the community of peers created over the past two years. Through continued funding by the Joyce Foundation, each teacher will receive three semester hours of graduate credit for each of the three semester courses. They are as follows:

Fall Semester 2001
Teachers going through the NBPTS portfolio process will meet on a bi-weekly basis and as needed, in critical friends and peer review groups as they begin to document write about, and reflect on: (1) their professional accomplishments and (2) their outreach to families and communities. In addition, teachers are creating a timeline for completing entries 1-3 and experimenting with videotaping their classrooms.

Spring Semester 2002
Teachers will meet on a bi-weekly basis and as needed, to discuss videotaping their classrooms, analyzing student work, and reflecting on their teaching and learning. Teachers will preview each other's videos and read each other's commentaries to provide constructive feedback, ask questions, and check for evidence of the NBPTS standards.

Summer Semester 2002
Teachers will meet bi-weekly in certification area groups to prepare for the assessment center activities. Experts in each area will be brought in to work with teachers as they prepare for their assessment.

2001-2002	**Fall 2001 – NBPTS portfolio development support -3 SH**	**Spring 2002 - NBPTS portfolio development support - 3 SH**	**Summer 2002 Assessment Center Preparation and Mentor Training – 3SH**

We anticipate that all teachers who begin the process will complete it. We anticipate a higher than national average achieve rate for this group because of the connection of National Board standards and portfolio development in the two-year master's cohort.

Currently, the national achieve rate is 45%. We expect an achieve rate of 75-80% the first year. Those not achieving the first time will bank their acceptable scores and redo those components of their portfolio that were unacceptable the next year. Support will be available for that small group of teachers.

Program Evaluation

Program faculty used a variety of evaluation tools to monitor the progress of the program as it unfolded and to determine the overall effectiveness of the program upon completion. Evaluation strategies for the program and the results follow:

1. Program faculty will track participant selection, retention and graduation rates:
   Twenty-five teachers were admitted to the program during Fall Semester, 1999; one person declined admission. During Spring Semester, 2000, one teacher dropped out of the program due to a series of family illnesses and another dropped out at the conclusion of Spring Semester 2000 because of pregnancy. The cohort consisted of 22 cohort members, representing nine of the 20 Comer schools. Six of the teachers are Caucasian, 16 are African-American. The teacher range teaching experience from two years to 35 years; most have between 10 and 15 years experience or from 22 to 29 years experience. (These highly experienced teachers have been identified as current or potential school-based leaders). The schools serve a predominantly African American population of students whose families report extremely low levels of income. All cohort members graduated.

2. We will maintain records to determine the extent to which the curriculum is taught as designed, and adjust accordingly.

- *Strategic modifications to the curriculum for year two included:*
  - *Changing the course sequence to offer the Understanding Teaching and Learning course in the Fall after an analysis of the Pathwise data*
  - *Incorporation of the NBPTS standards into the courses*
  - *Alignment of the coursework with the NBPTS/action research course*
  - *Addressing areas of concern based on the Pathwise observation data*

3. We will summarize the participants' school-level change initiatives to document the extent to which they were successful in affecting reform.

- *During summer 2000, participants completed a course on School-level Change. Participants learned about: staff development models, leadership characteristics, school reform models, and adult learning. Assignments included: developing a philosophy of teacher leadership, designing research-based professional development workshops for their school, based on needs identified in the school's*

School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA); and documented their accomplishments as teacher leaders. During Year Two, teachers will be asked to document their activities as school leaders e.g., participation in the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT) and staff development team, and to track changes at the building level.

- *In fall 2000, cohort participants began to keep a reflective journal to document their observations, concerns, etc., on their role as an evolving school leader. This year-long project will be one of the components included in their culminating portfolio project.*

4. We will report the number of teachers who intend to go through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards assessment process, and report the outcome.
- *Currently 13 teachers from the cohort going through the NBPTS assessment process.*

5. We will collect data from program participants, principals and UIC faculty on their level of satisfaction with the program, including a discussion of its strengths and weaknesses.
- *Course evaluations have been designed to assess if and how the coursework is having an impact on teaching and learning in the participants' classrooms. An analysis of these evaluations is being used to adjust courses both in the program and across similar courses in the College of Education. Evaluation data can also add to the literature on effective teacher preparation, which can be disseminated more widely. One of the major expectations of the program is increased student achievement as a result of teacher reflective practice and modification. Through observation and continues interviews, teachers are demonstrating evidence of their learning and classroom application. It has become the norm to have teachers give spontaneous testimonies about the transformations that are occurring in their workplaces as a result of this experience.*
- *Teachers are saying: "This is powerful! I always lectured to my class and they took notes. I have never tried many of the models of teaching we've been talking about before...but they work!" "I'm excited and my kids are excited about learning!" "I'm not sure I could have done this on my own. It's wonderful to work with other people who support you and who are doing the same kinds of things".*
- *Principals in the network are also impressed with the cohort. Powerful affirmations have been made about new leadership that has emerged, scholarly conversations about teaching and learning, and more professional examination of student work. Principals are saying: "I can see the change." "I'm excited that they always want to share the work that they're doing with me." "If I could just clone them."*

6. We will rate program participants on their potential as mentors to UIC pre-service teachers.
- *Program faculty has been trained to observe and assess teachers using the ETS Pathwise Classroom Performance Assessments. Baseline data was collected in*

October 1999. Follow-up observations were conducted in May 2001. Pathwise is built on a framework of essential teaching criteria, and is compatible with National Board standards. Teachers received information on the components of Pathwise prior to observations. Pathwise standards align with NBPTS, therefore, teachers will be reflectively thinking about, aligning, and adapting their practice through formal coursework, observations and feedback, and action research.

- *This information was used to identify potential mentors to UIC pre-service teachers and to reevaluate the course content for the fall, 2000 course, Understanding Teaching and Learning.*
- *Five cohort participants attended the UIC 2000 Summer Mentoring Institute and have agreed to support a UIC candidate during the upcoming school year. Two pre-service teachers have been placed with Comer school teachers.*

Pathwise	NBPTS
•organizing content knowledge for student learning; •creating an environment for student learning; •teaching for student learning; and •teacher professionalism	•teachers are committed to students and their learning; •teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students •teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; •teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and •teachers are members of learning communities.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The National Board's mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by:

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers (see http:www.nbpts.org).

The NBPTS mission has received bipartisan political support at the state and national level, as well as the support of a myriad of national organizations, private foundations and business organizations, the two major teacher organizations, teacher educators, education organizations, and most important--classroom teachers. Colleges of Education

in general, and teacher preparation programs specifically, both pre-service and advanced programs, are strategically placed to advance the third point.

As the world continues to change, so must teacher preparation. Although the end goal of teacher preparation programs may not be to create a cadre of NBCTs, it makes sense to align programs with the five core propositions and to include the certificate specific standards when appropriate in order to provide pre- and in-service teachers with the knowledge and skills recognized as those of accomplished teachers. Each state has set entry-level standards for novice teachers. NBPTS has set advanced standards for experienced teachers. Teacher preparation programs have a rare opportunity to recreate themselves by explicitly aligning their curriculum to reflect the agreed upon standards of accomplished teaching. Research consistently shows that the teacher is the key to student achievement. We have an unprecedented opportunity to be key players in preparing accomplished teachers for America's students. It is truly an exciting time to be a teacher educator!

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